during the entire crop season. The Scheme is available upto 15th June for Sowing Failure Option and upto 30th June for Seasonal Rainfall Insurance.

(b) The designing of a rainfall insurance product requires historical crop yield data and historical rainfall data for a period of atleast 30 years. At present India Meteorological Department (IMD) is the only independent agency recording the rainfall data and the IMD network is limited mostly to the Distt. Headquarters. Initially National Insurance Academy collected the rainfall data for 300 rain gauge stations. However, being a relatively new product, AICL decided to implement Varsha Bima Yojana in 130 IMD rain gauge stations only.

(c) At present only 130 districts in 10 States namely Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Tamil Nadu, Uttranchal & Uttar Pradesh are covered under the scheme. In Andhra Pradesh, during Kharif-2005, the Scheme was launched in Ananthpur, Cuddapah, Warangal, Kurnool, Nizamabad, Adilabad, Karimnagar, Khammam, East, Godawari and Vizag districts.

(d) AICL proposes to expand the Scheme and cover about 250 IMD rain gauge stations across the country during Kharif-2006.

Short term refinancing by NABARD

1531. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Governments of Punjab, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh and some other States have demanded that percentage of short term refinance for seasonal agricultural operations of the NABARD should be enhanced form a mere 30 per cent to 75 per cent so that the farmers' dependence on State and Central Co-operative Banks with high rate of interest is proportionately curtailed; and

(b) if so, what is Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) and (b) Requests have been received to enhance the qunatum of short-term refinance from NABARD. Due to limited low cost funds available with NABARD, presently the enhancement has not been found feasible. However, Cooperative Banks' generally charge a higher rate of interest not only on account of extent of refinance by NABARD but also due to its multi-tier structure, high level of overdues, high transaction

cost, etc. In view of this, the Government constituted a Task Force to strengthen the co-operative credit structure, the report of which has been accepted by the Government for implementation. This is expected to bring overall improvement in the short-term co-operative credit structure thereby enabling them to reduce their lending rates.

Funding of Mega Projects

1532. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposals under India Infrastructure Financing Company Limited (IIFCL) for funding mega projects from various State Governments, particularly the State of Maharashtra; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) No proposal has been received from Maharashtra.

(b) Does not arise.

Kisan Credit Cards

1533. DR.GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria for issuing Kisan Credit Cards;

(b) the objectives for issuing these Cards;

(c) the number of farmers in Rajasthan eligible for Kisan Credit Cards;

(d) the number of Kisan Credit Cards issued to farmer of Rajasthan, till date since its inception, year-wise;

(e) the amount of money advanced to these farmers under this scheme, year-wise; and

(f) by when Government expect to cover all the farmers of Rajasthan under this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) and (b) The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme was primarily intended to cater to the short-term credit requirements of the farmers and the banks issued KCCs to farmers who